



Information
on the activities within the framework of the Canada-Ukraine Partnership
Project for Regional Governance and Development (RGD)
in March 2008

- On March 7th, Zakarpattya Oblast held a **meeting between working groups and Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration**. The goal of the meeting was to discuss how to move forward the action planning process in Zakarpattya. The meeting was lead by Bill Pardy, RGD Expert in Community Economic Development. The main task of the meeting was to establish a communication structure for working groups and relevant departments of Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration. This would allow for consistent and regular communication between the working groups and Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration with regard to the regional action planning process. Bill Pardy also presented a diagram that outlined the steps that needed to be taken for implementation of an action plan. As a result of the meeting, it was agreed that the participation by appropriate departments of Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration in regional working groups is necessary to develop high quality action plans, and to ensure that they can be integrated within the existing regional development programs of the oblast. Participants also agreed that short-term actions for implementation in 2008-2009 should be developed by March-April. The development of middle and long-term actions would continue.
- On March 11, Zakarpattya regional experts and moderators of working groups met to discuss the results of the regional action planning process. They decided to bring together all five working groups in a joint meeting on March 17, 2008 in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas and results among the working groups, and to improve regional action plans. Additionally, the working groups for “Development of Tourism and Recreation Industry” and “Expanding Cross-border and Euroregional Cooperation” met on March 12, and March 14, respectively, to make further improvements to the short term actions of the action plans in these priority areas. Bill Pardy provided methodological support and expertise for all of the above-mentioned meetings.
- The first **Canada-Ukraine Business Summit** took place in Dnipropetrovsk and Kyiv on March 12-14, 2008. Over the three days of the summit, more than 300 high level representatives from more than 50 Canadian and 70 Ukrainian companies, scientific institutions and other organizations attended the event. The summit included a plenary session and targeted sectoral sessions, during which participants shared information and success stories of their companies and organizations, and had a chance to network and identify new business and scientific opportunities. The summit participants saw a great potential for future business and investment relations between the two countries. In this regard, the summit was instrumental in laying the ground for a new, mature and globally competitive Ukraine-Canada business and investment relationship. RGD staff and partners from Zakarpattya and Zaporizhzhia oblasts attended the summit. The RGD delegation was particularly interested in learning about different financial instruments for business and investment, specifically co-operation with EBRD, IFC, Ukrainian Center for Promoting Foreign Investments, and other financial and business investment organizations. By participating in the Canada-Ukraine Business Summit, the RGD project representatives gained new and valuable knowledge about investment promotion and cooperation with businesses. This knowledge will be applied in the implementation of regional priorities in the areas of economic development and investment attraction.
- On March 17, 2008, a **joint meeting of regional working groups** took place in Zakarpattya. The purpose of this meeting was to review and discuss draft action plans, and to exchange best practices and lessons

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learned in the action planning process. 40 working group members, representatives of regional and local authorities, and regional NGOs participated in the meeting. Ihor Sanzharovskyi, RGD Senior Technical Advisor, was also in attendance. The key result of the meeting was a consensus among the working groups as to the further steps required to finalize regional action plans. Participants provided suggestions and exchanged ideas on how to improve the action plans developed by each of the working groups. At the end, it was decided to organize another joint meeting in April 2008 to discuss the final drafts of the action plans and to present them to Zakarpattya Oblast State Administration.

In follow-up to this meeting, each working group came together to incorporate the suggestions and feedback received into their action plans. The working group for Economy, met on March 20 and 28, and the working group for Cross Border Cooperation, met on March 26. Working groups for Tourism, Human development, and Environmental Protection held a joint meeting on March 27.

- On March 18, the **First Regional Tourism Development Forum** was held in Zaporizhzhia. This forum was a part of the preliminary activities in the implementation of the action plan within the Historical, Cultural Tourism and Resort Industry priority. More than 70 representatives of the oblast and rayon governments, civil society organizations and tourism businesses attended the event. Major regional enterprises in the tourism industry, such as tourism agencies, hotels, restaurants and museums were represented at the forum. The main objective of this event was to convene regional tourism stakeholders in order to foster cooperation between them in the field of regional tourism development. The participants received an update about the implementation of the two small projects within the Tourism priority that are being implemented in the oblast with the support by the RGD project. These are *Creation of a Tourism Network through the Establishment of an Internet Tourism Map of Zaporizhzhia Oblast* and *Establishment of a Tourism Information Centre in Melitopol*. The regional mass media, business, government and community expressed a great deal of interest in these projects.

During the Forum Larysa Bratsylo, Deputy Head of the Department of Culture and Tourism of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration spoke about the Oblast State Administration's plans for developing tourism in Zaporizhzhia oblast. The discussion touched on a number of issues, such as establishment of tourism centers, providing up-to-date information about tourism services, challenges in tourism development in Zaporizhzhia oblast, proposals from business and community concerning ways of solving the problems in this sphere, and introduction of innovations, among others. The proposal about the establishment of the so called "tourism tunnel" Zaporizhzhia-Melitopol-Berdyansk was well received. Information about the existing voluntary associations of tourism enterprises both abroad and in Ukraine, in particular in Kharkov and Sevastopol, caught the attention of many businessmen.

The key result of the Forum was the initiation of different partnerships for tourism development in Zaporizhzhia oblast. There were many proposals for partnering with the Oblast State Administration and Oblast Council. They will be further elaborated and submitted to Zaporizhzhia RGD project regional office by March 20, 2008. Many business representatives supported the idea of establishing an Agency of Tourism Agencies and Resorts. And, Zaporizhzhia Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry initiated the establishment of the Tourism Cluster in Zaporizhzhia oblast. Overall, the participants came to a consensus about the benefits of developing partnerships in the tourism field through joint activities and events. The forum was widely covered in the regional mass media. Regional newspapers Pravda, Gorozhanin, Economicheskije Izvestiya, and MIG published articles and editorials about the event. It was broadcasted on TRC "Alex" and TV-5. News clips about the forum were also broadcasted on regional radio stations such as Zaporizhzhia and Zaporizhzhia FM. Additionally, information about the two small projects was available on the websites of Narodna Pravda, Ukrprostir Berdyansk informatciynyi, as well as on the official website of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration.

- Duncan Leitch, RGD Lead International Expert, visited Uzhgorod on March 19-20, 2008. The purpose of this visit was to provide expert support to the action planning process in Zakarpattya and to discuss activities planned for the following fiscal year. He met with the staff, regional experts, and moderators of the working groups. Also he met with Vasyl Papp, Deputy Head of Main Department of Economy, to discuss partnership and cooperation with the Department of Economy for the following year. The three main issues discussed during the visit were finalizing regional action plans, developing infrastructure investment projects

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and small scale projects for the implementation of the strategy, and developing the regional agreement between Cabinet of Ministers and Zakarpattia Oblast State Administration.

- On March 21, a visiting public meeting of the social and political coalition **Ukrainian Forum: Ukraine-2015: National Development Strategy** was held in Zaporizhzhia. The participants of the meeting included leadership of the political coalition, senior officials of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration and Oblast Council, heads of leading regional enterprises, NGOs and political party representatives, and academia. Irina Lekh, Zaporizhzhia RGD project regional manager, also attended the event. The meeting was a continuation of the Ukrainian Forum's practice of holding open public discussion on Ukraine's strategic priorities, such as economy, social and human development, and foreign and domestic policy. During the meeting, Valery Tcherkaska, Acting Head of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration, informed the participants about the completion of the Regional Development Strategy of Zaporizhzhia oblast until 2015. He stressed that the strategy was a product of joint efforts by the government and the community. More than 20,000 citizens of the oblast were involved in the process of strategic planning. Mr. Tcherkaska asked the participants to express their thoughts regarding the Draft Strategy. All of the comments and proposals will be taken into account prior to submitting the Strategy document for review and approval by the Oblast Council. Information about the Regional Development Strategy of Zaporizhzhia oblast was available through the local mass media, in particular, through articles in newspapers Pravda, Subbota Plus, Zaporiz'ka Sich, and MIG, and through broadcasts on TV-channels TV-5, ZOSTRC Zaporizhzhia. News clips were also broadcasted on radio stations Zaporizhzhia, Zaporizhzhia FM, and Velyky Lug. Additionally, information was available on the Ukrprostir website and official websites of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration and Oblast Council.
- In March, Zaporizhzhia oblast continued to implement two **small projects** within the tourism development priority of the Regional Strategy - "Creation of a Tourism Network through the Establishment of an Internet Tourism Map of Zaporizhzhia Oblast" and "Establishment of a Tourism Information Centre in Melitopol." The project team of the Tourism Map project held a number of meetings in March. As a result, the team selected top priority goals and tasks associated with the implementation of this project, assigned responsibilities for specific tasks among the team members, held consultations with IT-specialists, developed a logo and motto of the project, and designed the layout of the home page menu. Additionally, the team evaluated the attractiveness of the top ten tourist sites in the oblast, prepared information about these sites for the website database, and created the home page of the website "Internet Tourism Map of Zaporizhzhia Oblast." The Tourism Centre project team acquired the necessary technical equipment for the center, designed the layout of the centre website, and commenced the advertisement campaign about the tourism centre. Serhiy Dyachenko, the champion of this project, delivered a presentation about the implementation of this project at the First Regional Forum on Tourism Development. The official opening of the center is planned for the end of April 2008.
- On March 31, regional experts and moderators of the working groups in Zakarpattia met with Volodymyr Hoblyk, Deputy Head of Zakarpattia Oblast State Administration to provide him an update about the regional action planning process. Volodymyr Hoblyk suggested a few amendments and additions to the action plans. It was decided to hold a joint meeting of the working groups on April 9 to discuss the final action plans, which will then be presented to Zakarpattia Oblast State Administration and Zakarpattia Oblast Council.
- During the month of March, RGD project was active in supporting **donor coordination** in Zaporizhzhia oblast.
 - On March 6, Irina Lekh, Zaporizhzhia RGD Project Oblast Manager, participated in the opening seminar of the "Community-based Approach to Local Government" project, which is supported by Tacis. She delivered a presentation about RGD project's experience in engaging the wide public into the regional development process. Olexander Bereznyi, First Deputy Head of Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration, who chaired the meeting, applauded the results achieved by the project. Following the seminar, Iryna Lekh held a separate meeting with Jeysingh Sah, Project Manager of the "Community-based Approach to Local Government" project. They agreed to share information about the projects' and to explore opportunities for holding joint activities in some areas.

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- On March 13, Irina Lekh, Zaporizhzhia RGD Project Regional Manager, held a meeting with Denis Torkhovyi, senior analyst of the project “Business Environment and Entrepreneurship Development in Ukraine,” funded by the International Finance Corporation. As a result of the discussion, they agreed to establish a partnership in the area of investments attraction, which is a strategic priority for Zaporizhzhia oblast development.
- RGD project continued its cooperation with the World Bank in the implementation of the operational tasks within the Environment priority of the Regional Strategy. On March 26, a presentation of the new website “EkoSvit Zaporizhzhia” was held. This website was established by a team comprising of Zaporizhzhia city government officials, ecological organizations, Center on Medical and Ecological Issues and Risk Assessments (Kyiv), and Zaporizhzhia press club, with support by the World Bank in Ukraine. Andrii Yelkin, a winner of the contest “I’m Guiding the Future of my Land,” which was held within the framework of the RGD project, tested the website. The main objective of the website is to provide information about the environment and health of Zaporizhzhia residents and of Ukraine as a whole. Another goal of the site is to explore different ways to tackle pollution and other environmental challenges. This website also provides information about the ‘Environmental Partnership in Zaporizhzhia’ Project, which was supported by the World Bank. The address of the website is: <http://eco.health.zp.ua>.
- Within the framework of local strategies development in Zaporizhzhia oblast, the RGD “pilot territories” completed developing rayon and city strategies in March 2008. Activities in the four Azov seacoast rayons resulted in signing of the Cooperation Agreement between the four rayons. The “Concept of the Development Strategy for the Seacoast Rayons' Recreational Potential” was also developed. RGD Project recommended to Zaporizhzhia Oblast State Administration to include the Concept as a separate chapter in the Regional Development Strategy until 2015. On March 28, information about local strategies development was broadcasted live on the ZOSTRC “Zaporizhzhia.” A follow-up event on activities in the “pilots” will take place on April 4, 2008.

More detailed information about Project events and activities can be found at www.rgd.org.ua.

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